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A HAPPY NEW YEAR

AND OTHER VERSES

C. E. DE LA POER BERESFORD

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A HAPPY NEW YEAR

AND OTHER VERSES

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BY

C. E. DE LA POER BERESFORD

ETON COLLEGE
SPOTTISWOODE & CO., LTD.

1913

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TO MY DEAR WIFE

OLD PLACE, 1913

SSON12

My thanks are due to the Editors, "Blackwood's Magazine," "Country Life," "The Londonderry Sentinel," for their kindness in allowing me to re-print verses that have appeared in their publications.

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A Happy New Year.

To the young, to the brave and the strong,
Before whom the future outspreads
As a board all light-handed to sweep,
The unknown, and the right and the wrong,
A Happy New Year !

To the good, to the tender and true,
Who have stood by our side on the path
Of life's follies and troubles and cares,
The path that we all must pursue,
A Happy New Year !

For the old, for the frail and the weak,
To whom mem'ry calls up in a dream
The never attained *might have been*,
We with love and affection bespeak
A Happy New Year !

Cradle Song.

(Imitated from the Russian.)

SLEEP ! Babyónka,* sleep !
 By thy side Bábochka† watches.
 Round the house the wind blows high,
 Soars the eagle in the sky,
 Hark, I hear the woodcock cry.
 Sleep, my darling, sleep !
 O'er thy slumbers Saints are watching.

Sleep ! Babyónka, sleep !
 Bábochka will rock thy cradle.
 Wind that rushes through the trees,
 Eagle soaring o'er the breeze,
 Woodcock whistling in the reeds,‡
 Bring my darling sleep !
 Babyónka dear, the Saints are watching.

Sleep ! my darling, sleep !
 Bábochka Babyónka watches.
 Wind and eagle, woodcock brown,
 All of them come rushing down
 To the cot where baby slumbers.
 They have brought Babyónka sleep.
 O'er thy slumbers Saints are watching.

* Babyónka, baby.

† Bábochka, little woman, mother.

‡ The sandbanks in the Oka and Volga are strewn with small white shells, and partly covered with sweet-smelling dock leaves; they swarm with landrails and woodcock. (D. Grigorovitch.)

Queen Thamar's Castle.

(Translated from Lermontof.)

IN Dariel's rocky gorges deep,
Where Terek's water madly moves,
There is a castle on the steep,
The scene of Queen Tamára's loves.
She seemed to play an angel's part ;
Black as a demon's was her heart.

The weary traveller from below
Looked on Tamára's window-glow,
And gazing on the twinkling light,
Went in to sup and pass the night.

But as the days of rosy dawn
Gilded the mountains in the morn,
Silence fell on Tamára's halls,
And Terek's madly rushing wave
A mangled corpse bore to its grave.

Ulster's Prayer.

O God, who once in ages past
Savedst from the fierce Red Sea
And Ramses' chariots following fast
Thy sons who sang to Thee :
Turn Thee again, Lord of the Saints,
Unto our suppliant side,
Who humbly beg Thy help against
Those who Thy faith deride.

'Gainst those who that pure faith can turn
To dogma harsh and strict,
From which all who its errors spurn
Are cast off derelict ;
We, as our fathers prayed before,
Fighting for faith and home,
Beseech Thee for Thy help once more
Against the wiles of Rome.

Dark Donegal.

THE ocean is dashing
 Its waves o'er the strand
 That shelters Sheep Haven
 With hillocks of sand.
 M'Swyne's Gun is winding
 His horn o'er the lea,
 Atlantic is grinding
 The dust of the sea.

It cuts from the fields,
 Lough, haven, and bay,
 And dark Donegal yields
 To its constant sword-play.*
 Through infinite inlets
 It pours willy-nilly,
 Into Ness and Mulroy,
 Sheep Haven and Swilly.

* The Rev. William Hamilton, D.D., born in Londonderry in December 1757, Rector of Clondevaddock, on Mulroy Bay, gives several instances of the encroachment of the sea sand on fertile and inhabited land. The town of Bannow in Wexford was a flourishing borough in the early part of the seventeenth century, while in his day the site was marked only by a few ruins, appearing above heaps of barren sand. Ulster Folk Lore, E. Andrews.

Atlantic was born
 Bluff, boisterous, coy ;
 It may storm at the Horn
 When it coos at Mulroy.
 The ocean is silent,
 Or noisy or sullen ;
 It may sleep at Melmore,
 Or rage at Rathmullan.

The ghosts of Saldanha*
 Still walk at Port Salon ;
 The bones of the Spaniards
 Lie deep off the Aran.
 In spite of these mem'ries,
 Or because of them all,
 The breeze carries gladness
 Over dark Donegal.

Dunfanaghy, September 2, 1913.

* H.M.S. "Saldanha," wrecked in Ballymastocker Bay, 1813.

Hy-Brasail.

NEAR where Horn its dark head
 Rears o'er the deep ocean,
 And the sea-birds whirl round
 In a constant commotion,
 Where loving Atlantic
 Outstretches its arms,
 Four islands romantic
 Lie, lost in their charms.

The farthest is Tory,
 Rough, rocky and stern,
 Inishbeg, Inishbofin,
 Inishdoe, as you turn
 Your rapt gaze to the west,
 Orange, rose-red, or grey,
 Stretch, three islands at rest
 In the calm of the bay.

And beyond them, most blest
 Of a realm without guile,
 In the sunshine and rest
 Lies Hy-Brasail, the isle
 Of the angels and saints,
 So lovely and dim,
 Where the sea's white foam breaks
 On its far distant rim.

The peasant who heard of
This wonderful isle
Set sail to the west
With a confident smile.
The dream of Hy-Brasail
Within his heart burned,
He was lost in the sea
And never returned.

Londonderry, September 10, 1913.

Bálor of the Great Blows.

HAVE ye read of the past in folios at Dublin
 Of Firwolgs, and of Pechts, and of red-headed
 Danes,

And Fomors from Tory, who people went troublin',
 Stealing woman and child, binding Irish in chains ?

Well, 'tis of these wild times and Ulster romantic,
 O'erspread by dark forests through which the elk
 called,
 And of rude pagan tribes, some dwarf, some gigantic,
 That I tell in this rhyme so poor and so bald.

In a deep gloomy glen near Muckish's mountain,
 Where the mist rolls in clouds and the waterfalls
 foam,
 From out of the cloud-rack, as out of a fountain ;
 Himself saw a quare sight as he rode his horse
 home.

In the glen at the mouth of a black souterrain
 (Where Crocknárágagh looks down upon Tory,
 The island where Bálor of the Great Blows did reign)
 Shane O'Dugan beheld what I tell in my story.

A woman as lovely as dead Ethné the Fair,
 With twelve ladies in waiting all clothed in gold,
 The Chief, MacKineely, and a boy with red hair,
 Came out the cave-dwelling and walked o'er the
 fold.

Now the red-pate is changed into Bálor the King,
 All bent on the murder of brave MacKineely;
 And although through the valley his daughter's shrieks
 ring,
 He cuts off his head on the stone Clough-an-neely.

Fierce King Bálor would fain kill his young grandsons
 too,
 But the Princess resolves with her children to fly,
 And the eldest grows into a young farrier, who
 Thrusts a red-heated iron in Bálor's one eye.

The wounded King calls to his one grandson, "Asthere!"
 Whilst forth from the sore wound rushes water like
 oil,
 From Falcarragh the whole way right up to Gweedore,
 Till it forms a lough three times as deep as Lough
 Foyle!

The Garden.

I KNOW a garden sheltered from the north
 And east by lichen'd walls and stately trees
 Facing the south in rows are bursting forth
 Masses of bright flowers, fertilised by bees ;
 In it from early morn, with spade and hoe,
 A good man trenches, digs, and plants, that things
 may grow.

I would my mind were like that garden fair—
 A fruitful soil touched by the spade of God !
 No weeds of prejudice might grow up there,
 No tares of ignorance disgrace the sod,
 But Wisdom, glad of such a soil and ground,
 Would plant her flowers therein—to scatter fragrance
 round.

A Song of Spring.

It was Spring, joyous Spring,
 When each bud had just unfolden,
 From its bursting calyx golden,
 All the greenery of Spring,
 When I heard the cuckoo sing,
 Cuckoo ! cuckoo ! cuckoo !

It was Spring, joyous Spring,
 When the shepherd on the wold,
 Having tended well the fold,
 Saw the meek-eyed ewes well-sheltered
 'Gainst the hail and rain that pelted
 On the downs, in the Spring !

It was Spring, joyous Spring,
 And the black thorn and the white,
 Breaking forth from out the night
 And the dark of Winter's gloom,
 Raced the chestnuts into bloom
 With the leaves, in gentle Spring.

It was Spring, joyous Spring,
 When from bush and bough and tree
 Burst a song of joy to Thee,
 Who hast made the lark that singeth,
 And the earth whose produce bringeth
 Forth in Spring :
 When I heard the cuckoo sing,
 Cuckoo ! cuckoo ! cuckoo !

The Miráge on Kizil Koom.

WHERE the hot sun o'er Caspian's reedy shore
 In a red ball of fire descends in gloom,
 I trod the desert's silent, sandy floor,
 Called by the Turkománs the Kizil Koom.

No grass, no flower relieves the rusty sheen,
 Perhaps an antelope goes rushing through
 The rare sage-brush ; no water there is seen,
 Save where the fell miráge distracts the view.

And that miráge ! At first a little cloud,
 From which green trees and silvery lakes arise,
 Where white felucca sails deceive the crowd
 Of weary travellers, and fool their eyes.

Ah ! what art thou, miráge ? What have I seen ?

“ I am the many things of which you dream ”

“ At morn of life, but never hold at e'en.”

“ I am the hopes with which your fancies teem ! ”

“ I am the scholar's prize, the high degree ; ”

“ The sword of steel at side, the fox's brush ; ”

“ The little cross of bronze, the prized V.C. ; ”

“ The thundering sound of steeds, the warrior's rush ! ”

“ I am the heart's desire, the lover bold ; ”

“ I am the silken gown, the judge's chair

“ I am the battle won ; the book well sold

“ Coronet ; Ermine ! Castle in the air !

Ah ! Kizil Koom, Red Sand, what more dost say

In thy miráge to travellers o'er thy floor ?

“ I teach content to those who through the way

Of life well spent have passed, and dream no more.”

A Dream of Samarkánd.

BETWEEN the mountains of Alai
 And Tian-Shan's heavenly chain
 Lies the home of the Zagatai,
 Fergána's fruitful plain.
 First of the towns whose domes and wall
 Deck that illustrious land
 Stands the lame Timùr's capital,
 His best-loved Samarkánd.

I stood inside a shattered room,
 Stricken by earthquakes rife,
 That Timùr raised above the tomb
 Of Ming's fair daughter-wife.
 Daughter of China's Bógdu-Khan,
 Wife of the great Timùr,
 Who 'twixt them ruled the vast inland
 From Red Sea to Amùr.

Above an arch a double dome
 Bites in the clear blue sky
 (Bramanté's famous fane at Rome
 Seems scarce so broad and high).

Above the dome a crescent bright
 Watched sleepy Samarkánd,
 Asleep to-day, but wide awake
 When Timùr ruled the land.

Sure, such a tomb was never raised
 By widower to wife !
 Nor Akhbar brave nor Shah Jehán
 Did thus weld bricks to life.
 The Táj, in marble shining bright
 By Agra's sun-baked walls,
 Must yield the palm for sheer delight
 To Bibi-Khánim's halls.

The sun shines through the double dome,
 Lighting its inner skin,
 It shows the remnant of the stair
 That upwards led within,
 From which the muezzin, climbing slow,
 To shout the evening prayer,
 Could see the Rigistán below,
 Shir-Dár and Tilla-Kare.

I seemed to see the cliffs at Kesh,
 Whence came the great Amìr,
 From whose red rift the Zarafshán
 Sends forth its waters clear.
 I seemed to see the Tatar horde,
 Under Toktámish brave,
 Beaten and drowning in the ford
 That crosses Kubán's wave.

I saw the Mogul army move
 To conquer Hindostán ;
 Its serried, strong divisions prove
 The master mind of man.
 Ninety-two thousand fretting steeds
 Rush down from hill to plain ;
 Timùr descends the khud by ropes,
 Five times let down again.

The Mongols march upon Attock
 And cross the rivers five,
 Timùr joins forces at Multán
 With all his sons alive ;
 His armies then invest Batnir,
 They come to Delhi's towers,
 Mahmud Sultán gives battle there,
 Timùr his standard lowers.

Asia, from Irtish to Ormuz
 O'er-run by Timùr's bands,
 Irán, Turán and Ind had felt
 The weight of Mongol hands.
 Aleppo taken by the horde,
 Timùr fresh laurels culls,
 And covers Baghdad's reeking sword
 With pyramids of skulls.

Now on Angóra's fateful plain
 The " Lightning " Bayazet
 Urges his Turks to fight, in vain,
 'Gainst Mongol and kismet.

'Twas told that Bayazet was caged
 Just like a timid deer,
 But Timùr never warfare waged
 On captives of his spear.

From all these scenes of lust and blood
 I turn to Samarkánd,
 Where Zarafshán's refreshing flood
 Gives life unto the land.
 Here Timùr mosque and palace built
 Around a sheltered pool,
 Set in a field with arbours gilt,
 And called it Khân-i-Gül.

Thousands of guests were bid to share
 The great Amir's largesse,
 The Guilds and Trades were gathered there,
 The wronged received redress.
 Here, in his coat of mail of steel,
 Timùr, 'midst his sepoys,
 From Russ, and France, and far Castille,
 Received the Grand Envoys.

Six grandsons of the Great Amir
 Wed brides of princely rank,
 Nine times the brides their dresses change,
 Nine times their handmaids thank.

Each time each bride is fresh arrayed,
 Fall to the ground in showers
 Rubies and diamonds, which the maid
 Keeps as her bridal flowers !

I see Timùr, one boot, one glove,
 And with his lint-white hair,
 Delighted on his chess-board move
 Fifty-six pieces fair.
 The blood-red ruby in his ear
 Trembles before my view,
 But when his rage the stone shakes there,
 'Fore God ! the world shakes too.

At last the Mogul Emperor
 Invades far-off Cathay,
 He starts, the tired conqueror,
 Marching ten miles a day,
 Crosses Syr-Dária's solid stream,
 And stops at Otrár, when
 He sees the blade of Àzrael gleam
 At three-score years and ten.

Come with me to the Gür-Amir,
 Within whose simple walls
 Over a six-foot block of jade
 A horsehair standard falls.
 Beneath the dark and polished stone
 Descends a bare brick stair,
 Leading to Tamerlane's own tomb,
 Nor pomp nor state is there.

Beneath the fluted, darkened dome,
Where dimly seen in gloom,
Surrounded by an Arab text,
Hangs Timùr's tattered plume,
Outside the simple marble rail
Engraved with Timùr's name,
The passing pilgrim cannot fail
To muse on Timùr's fame.

At Santa Sophia, Constantinople.

(A Fragment.)

THERE is the altar, there is the wall,
Disfigured by Méhemet's hand :
We should raise the Cross of Christ in the hall
Where the Turkish banners stand ;
And the tones of " Te Deum," quenched in blood,
Should resound again in the land.

The Hill Cities.

ALL along the line of mountains
 That begin at Narni's towers,
 Stand the grey and brown hill cities,
 'Midst the sunshine and the showers.
 Each a tower of strength itself,
 Well walled and machicolated,
 Or for Ghibelline or Guelph,
 Each 'twixt each interpolated ;
 Now for Kaiser, now for Pope,
 Narni, Terni, and Spoleto.
 From its crag or hilly slope
 Tremi faces Montefalco,
 By Topino sits Foligno,
 Assisi of the stony street,
 Almost at its base is Spello
 Where the chalk and limestone meet.
 Here the rain-clouds veil the mountain,
 Here the sunbeams chase the sleet,
 And the rivers fill the fountain
 Grey in proud Perugia's street.

Florence from San Miniato.

BENEATH my feet the smokeless city fair :
 Duomo and Giotto's noble tower arise
 Like sentinels o'er Florence ! In the air
 Something, not mist, but silvery vapour, lies.

Up a steep hill climbs famous Fiésole
 From out the dark woods of Domenico,
 Close to Arno's bank is Santa Crocé,
 Where lies at rest great Michael Angelo.

And through the landscape, winding softly there,
 Arno betwixt his buttressed banks doth run
 Solemn and silent, steely bright and fair,
 Towards Carrara's rocks, and setting sun.

The Thames.

I love thy banks the best, O silent Thames,
 At morning time,
 When fogs steal o'er them, and with ruddy flames
 The still weak sun
 Bursts, now and then, at moments through the mist
 And sudden flies,
 Leaving the landscape which his beams have kissed,
 Cold and forlorn ;
 And then, again returning to the fight,
 The God of morn
 Dispels the clouds, and bathes in trembling light
 Thy banks so gay.
 Or struggling with the clouds, now here, now there,
 O'erpowers them, and ushers in the day.

I love thy banks again, O merry Thames,
 Ambient and gay,
 When lowing herds graze in thy meads, or lie
 With whisk of tail
 In the long grass, half hidden by the glazed
 And heated air,
 And chew the cud half-silent or half-dazed.
 How deadly still
 Is the full tide of noon, when beasts and birds
 Alike repose,

And from the sullen shade not e'en a bee
 Or dragon-fly
 Breaks the hour's silence ! Then the cirrus clouds,
 Wind-chas'd and heavy, roll or stagger by.

I love thy banks at all times, silver Thames,
 But certes the least
 When huge waves suddenly immerse their sides,
 And from the East,
 With sound of harp, or flute, and megaphones,
 Young men and maids
 On steamers Allah's Holy Name invoke
 In raucous tones
 No Moslem knows, and call me curious names,
 And drink, and smoke
 Not nargiléhs, but strong cigars, whose whiff
 Borne on the air,
 Shocks my olfactory nerves, and makes me sick,
 Sick of them all, the Thames, the whole affair !

In Te, Domine, spero.

'Tis said that as the sinner dies,
 Around him hover shadowy forms,
 Reflecting in his glassy eyes
 Some cloudy visions in Death's storms.

When on the hard-fought battle plain
 Gushes forth hot the bright red blood
 From out the bullet wound's blue stain,
 With throbs that show the arterial flood;

The shadowy forms may still be near
 Just where his body stains the sod,
 As sure of death but void of fear
 The man commends his soul to God.

The half-forgotten youthful days,
 His father's voice, his mother's tears,
 Come back to him as whilst he prays
 Dark Azraël's rustling wings he hears.

Lost and forgotten, far from home
 (The stretcher-bearers pass him by)
 He dies alone : no, not alone,
 The shadowy forms are watching nigh.

So ends the sinner. As he dies
 The shadowy forms (his own good deeds)
 Are wafted onward to the skies
 To plead for him in heavenly meads.

To Miss X. de C. on her Birthday.

O'ER this your natal day may angels watch and love
 preside,
Your path with flowers be strewn and all betide
To make your ways below, in joy begun,
Run on through smiling fields till life be done.

Londonderry City Election, 1885.

Chas. E. Lewis, Q.C. (C.) 1824.

Justin McCarthy (P.) 1795.

To the black North, to Derry fair, a great "Historian"
 came,
 Backed by the strength of all his clan, by Parnell's
 mighty name,
 His was the task, by wiles or force, to wrest the Virgin
 Crown
 From the proud city by the Foyle, of siege's great
 renown.
 In vain the Separatist force, for naught their trumpets
 blown,
 Derry has shown that she prefers a "history" of her
 own !

Coblentz, December 1885.

Londonderry City Election, 1913.

Hogg (N.) 2699.
Colonel Pakenham (C.) 2642.

Flow, Foyle, full of tears, not water, on to the main,
Past the wreck of the Boom, past Culmore, past
MacGilligan,
Take to the ocean, wind-swept and wave-tossed,
Our story of pain.

Close gates, so heavy and ancient, brave Prentice boys,
Shut out the sea, shut off England, shut out the
Union.
Shut out all links with our Empire, our trade and
communion,
Our hopes and our joys !

Blow, black from the North, cold wind from Malin
Head !
Take to our comrades in Leinster, in Connacht, in
Munster,
The tale of our struggle, our work, our disaster
Our honour is dead.

January 31, 1913.

To M. S.

(A Fragment.)

SAPPHO, your wild songs to the wind,
 The wild west wind,
 Recall an island to my mind,
 All mist-enshrined,
 Girt round with waves that break with force,
 Fearful, yet kind.

Sappho, your sad songs to the sea,
 The southern sea,
 Bring back sweet mem'ries of the waves,
 The waves to me,
 And wild swans flying o'er the white
 Sands, by the sea.

Sappho, the finest of your songs,
 "Hark to the rain!"
 Sends shivering through and through my heart
 Its sad refrain,
 Just as a broken lute-string strikes
 A soul in pain!

The Song of Timùr the Lame.

(Imitated from the Persian.)

LISTEN to me, my nightingale,
My darling, my light, and my rose !
I am sick of war and carnage,
I long for peace and repose.
My scimeter's flash in the light
Is not so bright as thy glances,
And the beams 'neath thine eyelids bright
Shame the flash of my spearmen's lances.

Catullus, Carmina xxxi., l. 12 to end.

“SALVE, o venusta Sirmio, atque hero gaude,
Gaudete vos, O Lydiae lacus undae,
Ridete quicquid est domi cachinnorum.”

“Hail, lovely Sirmio, and rejoice in me,
Rejoice, O tumbling Lydian waves, and see
In all my home peal out the laughter free!”

Catullus, Carmina lxxvi. (Si qua
recordanti).

“IF pleasure can to man have come
From his good deeds already done,
From sacred faith, from plight maintained,
From compact never yet profaned;
All these remain in store for thee
And fruits of thy lost love shall be.
Catullus, for long years to come
Thy breast shall be their only home!”

* * * *

O gods, if ye can pity me
Or mortal agony can see,
If only once I have been pure,
Tear out this cursed plague impure,
Which creeping through my frame at rest
Has chased all gladness from my breast.

* * * *

Just gods ! for sake of my own weal
I pray you that this wound may heal !

The Fisherman's Dream.

WHERE the light clouds o'er Etna's summit sleep
And the dread winged Harpies vigil keep,
Dark as the polished stone the blue wave falls,
Weaving a canopy o'er Neptune's halls.

Over his work the tired fisher nods
And in his dreams beholds the ancient gods.
Whilst gentle sleep his wearied senses numbs,
Swift in his trance fair Aphrodite comes ;
Light falls her footstep on the billowy wave,
Softly she smiles upon her willing slave ;
Blue as the ether in the heights above,
Radiant her eyes, all beaming o'er with love ;
Pink as the coral in the ocean foam,
Parted, her lips invite him to her home ;
And like the algae in the deep sea trove
Wavy her tresses in the zephyrs move ;
Whilst her soft whispers all his fears allay,
Thus love's fair goddess beckons him away.

"Come with me, fisher, leave thy dreary toil,
Fly from thy cares to Candia's blessed soil ;
'Neath Ida's mount far from the sun's fierce rays,
In a cool grot we'll pass the sweltering days,

And when the moon shines on the silver sea,
 Drawn by my doves thou'lt float along with me ;
 Hid in my cave shalt taste all love's delights,
 Whilst joyous days succeed the tranquil nights."

Ah ! shun her glances, danger lurketh there :
 Thus did her charms full often slaves ensnare.
 So young Adonis, who ne'er loved before,
 Fleeing her wiles, fell to the tusked boar,
 And Mars, the vengeful, direful, God of War,
 By Vulcan's net trapped, all Olympus saw !
 Rather let Juno, who befriends pure loves,
 Drive from thy side the siren and her doves.
 Think of thy home in Baïa's beauteous bay,
 Where sits thy wife, thy children joyous play,
 And of the taper by the Virgin's shrine
 Lit as a safeguard for their weal and thine.

Frightened he wakes, he starts, he rubs his eyes,
 Chased by the light the feckless phantom flies :
 Vanished the temptress, all his senses seem
 Once more his own ; but Santos ! what a dream !

Ashbrook, 1885.

The Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers at Pieters', February, 1900.

I stood on the glacis at Pieters'
 And read there the word "Inniskilling,"
 Written red in the blood of soldiers as brave
 As e'er took Her Majesty's shilling.
 I stood 'midst the ghosts of our children,
 Whose corpses beneath me were lying ;
 And it seemed that I heard o'er the wind of the velt
 Their voices come solemnly sighing.

They were taught from boyhood, these heroes,
 To fear neither rifle nor cannon ;
 They were taught first by Perry M'Clintock,
 Bob Ellis and fiery Buchanan.
 They rushed like the stream from the mountain,
 Or the wind o'er the Lakes of Fermanagh,
 And they fell like the leaves in the cold autumn blast,
 Or the drops pouring over the fountain.

Ah ! Mother of God ! but I see them
 Stagger. Thackeray ! Davidson ! more !
 And who is the next, thrusting on thro' the smoke ?
 It is he ! 'Tis *ma bouchal asthore* !

His eye has the look of the eagle,
 His shout tops the musketry's roar,
 Ah ! now he'll be in with the bay'net :
 No, he falls !—He is shot by a Boer.

We think of you children of Ulster,
 All unknown, yet so splendidly brave ;
 And although the remains of our dear ones
 Lie senseless and cold in the grave,
 Their mem'ries live now and for ever,
 Though their bones turn to dust 'neath the sod ;
 For the spirit and soul of the soldier
 Rise like sweet-smelling incense to God.

As I glanced over kopje and stone
 On the scene of this terrible drama,
 Past my eyes, other scenes, from the distant black North,
 Rolled on like a vast panorama.
 Such sights ere he gasped his last breath
 Perhaps appeared to the brave Fusilier,
 As at Thackeray's word he rushed forward to death
 With a bound and a heart-stirring cheer !

The dark clouds hang over a valley,
 The brown water rushes down foaming,
 The light from the cabin-door shines like a spark
 On the hill in the mists of the gloaming.
 The heather waves sweet in the wind
 That sweeps o'er the steep slopes of Sâwel ;
 The crooked-beaked eagle swoops down on the hind,
 Whilst the cock-grouse lies low for a marvel.

For thus, as we come to the entrance
 Of that lane that knows of no turning,
 Whether bullets are hissing, or rotten decks breaking,
 Or fever our wasted frame burning,
 The sights and the sounds of the home that we love
 O'er our minds come back hurriedly streaming,
 And we see in our dreams our long lost ones above,
 As Azraël's death-blade is gleaming.

* * * *

I stood 'midst the ghosts of our children,
 Whose corpses beneath me were lying ;
 And it seemed that I heard o'er the wind of the velt
 Their voices come solemnly sighing.

Petersburg, October, 1901.

Senlac.

GUILLAUME, fils naturel d'Arlette,
 Fit jurer une fois à Bayeux
 A Harold, le blond comte anglais,
 Sur les plus précieuses reliques
 Et aussi devant tous ses preux
 Toute loyauté et feauté.
 Harold jura qu'il l'aiderait
 A prendre à lui la succession
 (Enfin, donc, quand le temps viendrait)
 Du roi saxon le fainéant,
 Qu'il se mettrait de son côté
 Et de ses forces il l'aiderait.

Édouard le Confesseur mourut
 En grande odeur de sainteté,
 Le Comte Harold vite accourut
 (Mil soixante-six, et cinq janvier).
 Lui roi d'Angleterre fut élu
 Et par Ealdred couronné.
 Contre lui bientôt guerre à mort
 Northumberland a déclaré ;
 Ne voulant point tenter cette guerre,
 Qui lui allait à contre-cœur,
 Du Comte Edwin et Comte Morkère
 Harold épousa la jeune sœur.

Guillaume, tout furieux, à Rouen
 Prépare vite une expédition,
 Appelle à lui le grand Lanfranc,
 Evesque lombard, et Hildebrand,
 Assemble une armée de Français,
 Flamands, Italiens et Bretons,
 Et des gens de tous les païs
 De Pouille, et de Sicile, Normands.
 Je dis moult barons, moult canaille,
 Des hommes sans nom et sans carrière,
 Les longues lances, la vieille fêraille,
 Sous le grand drapeau de Saint-Pierre.

Faut savoir que cette compagnie,
 Ou plutôt bande d'aventuriers,
 Dont oncques ne virent France de leur vie,
 Furent bels et bons nommés *Français*,
 Tandis que Danois et Saxons
 Qu'Harold noblement commandait,
 Ceux de Sussesse et Saint-Edmond,
 Reçurent pour eux le nom d'*Anglais*.
 Les Français traversèrent La Manche
 Et descendirent en Angleterre
 Près d'Hastings, pendant qu'à l'arme blanche
 Harold tua Tostique, son frère.

Parlons donc de l'armée anglaise.
 Victorieuse a Stamford-le-Pont,
 Elle poussa fortement vers le camp
 Ou plutôt position française.

S'arrêtant à deux lieues de là,
 Harold envoya des espions,
 Qui lui rapportèrent la nouvelle
 " Plus prêtres que soldats entre Normands."
 Rit bien et long le roi anglais :
 " Ceux que vous vîtes si bien rasés ,
 Ne sont ni prêtres ni gens mal-nés,
 Ce sont de vaillans Chevaliers."

De Conches, de Toarz, Montgomméri
 A l'extrême gauche étaient rangés ;
 A droite, de Fergert, Améri
 Poitevins et Bretons commandaient ;
 Au centre, l'Evesque de Bayeux,
 Grand et majestueux Odon ;
 Puis Guillaume, avec tous ses preux ;
 Ainsi se rangèrent les Normands.
 Brave Taillefer, le Menestrel,
 Le premier coup de sabre donnant,
 Le premier tomba de sa selle,
 Chantant la chanson de Roland.

Fils-Osbert et Montgomméri
 Attaquèrent sur la droite anglaise,
 Avec Boulogne et Berri,
 En partant de la gauche française.
 De l'autre flanc, Alain Fergert,
 Barons de Maine et d'Améri
 Se ruerent sur la haute terre
 Retranchée de gros pilotis,

Où l'étendard au dragon d'or
 Flottait dessus les écussons
 Plantés en ligne, et juste derrière
 Brillaient les hâches-d'armes des Saxons.

Les hommes de Boulogne et de Poix
 Suivaient le Baron d'Améri
 Et donnèrent rudement maintes fois
 Sur la ligne des gros pilotis.
 Mais sous les coups terribles des hâches
 Et testes et bras tombaient par terre ;
 A vrai dire n'y avait point de lâches,
 Car corps-à-corps se fit la guerre.
 Tout de même dans le vaste fossé
 Bien des chevaliers sans chevaux
 De coups de hâche furent assommés,
 En tâchant de sortir de l'eau !

Troublés, et même un peu confus,
 Les écuyers aux destriers,
 Voyant ainsi tuer les preux,
 S'écriaient : " Fuyez donc, fuyez ! "
 Mais le dur évêque de Bayeux
 Arriva bientôt au galop,
 " Holà ! " dit-il ; " splendeur de Dieu !
 Faites face à l'ennemi, salops ! "
 Donc piquant fort des éperons
 Et frappant fortement de sa masse,
 Poussant toujours son cheval blanc,
 Le brave évêque se faisait place.

Le terrible combat rageait
 Du matin jusques après-midi ;
 Les Normands tous criaient, " Dex aie ! "
 Les Saxons criaient fort aussi.
 Vu que les flèches de nos archers
 N'atteignirent point à l'ennemi,
 Tous derrière leurs remparts courbés,
 Guillaume à ses gens commanda
 De tirer haut dans l'air les flèches.
 Arriva donc comme il pensa,
 Même sans pratiquer de brèche !

Le roi Harold et Gyrt, son frère,
 Ensemble bravement se battaient
 En haut du grand rempart de terre
 De gros pilotis couronné.
 Une flèche, qui semble tomber du ciel
 Et dans sa chute descendante vire,
 Atteignit Harold près de l'œil.
 Le roi tout hardiment retire
 De la blessure le bois cassé.
 Il tombe, se tenant à demi
 Evanoui sur son bouclier.
 L'ange gardien des Saxons frémit !

Sur toute la ligne des Français
 Se fit un mouvement en arrière ;
 C'était le moment des Anglais,
 Qui sautèrent par-dessus barrière.

Ils criaient hautement en revanche,
 “ A quoi bon, imbéciles, de fuir ?
 A moins de sauter par La Manche
 Vous ne reverrez point Saint-Cyr.”
 Arrive Sieur de Montgomméri,
 “ Frappez, François ! à nous le jour ;
 Frappez ! frappez ! frappez ! ” il crie :
 Les coups Normands redoublent d'ardeur !

Les Saxons, eux aussi frappent fort,
 Poussés sur Senlac-la-Colline,
 Se battaient toujours corps-à-corps,
 Quoique prévoyant leur ruine.
 L'on vit d'Auviler et d'Onbac,
 Saint-Clair, Fils-Ernest, Mortemer,
 Poussant les premiers vers Senlac,
 Fils-Ernest tombant mort à terre.
 Harold trois fois blessé est mort
 Et Gyrt est tué par Guillaume,
 Chancelle le fameux dragon d'or,
 Et tombe, le symbole du royaume.

Fut ainsi que tomba le sort !
 Guillaume rendit grâces à Dieu,
 Pleura la perte de ses deux frères,
 Remercia encore ses preux.
 Il donna au Grand Dieu la gloire
 Et fit planter les léopards
 Qui flottèrent avec la victoire
 Où gisait sale le dragon d'or.

D'Harold parmi tous les blessés
Fut impossible de connaître corps,
Mais Edith la Belle a trouvé
Son amant vivant, hélas ! mort.

J'ai tâché, chers et bons amis,
En réduisant ce rondelai
En termes tout simples, où il s'agit
De coups de lance, et coups d'épée,
De faire à tout le monde comprendre,
Marins, soldats, hommes, femmes, enfance,
Qu'il faut garder et pas rendre
Notre souveraine indépendance !
Une île n'est jamais à l'abri
D'un coup de main bien préparé :
Donc, sans négliger votre marine,
Veillez toujours sur votre armée.

Christmas-tide.

SILENTLY the snowflakes fall
 O'er the black and hardened ground ;
 Radiant crystals form a pall,
 Stretching far and wide around.

From the Ice-King's glitt'ring halls
 Bitterly the north wind blows ;
 Heap the logs within your walls,
 All the doors and windows close.

Many a hundred years ago,
 On this very Christmas Day,
 In a manger mean and low
 Christ, the son of Mary, lay.

Let our ways this Christmas-tide
 Follow in His steps above !
 Poor he lived and poor he died,
 All His doctrine was of love.

Ours to soothe the aching heart,
 Ours to charity bestow,
 Ours His knowledge to impart
 To the suffering ones below !

May that charity ne'er fail,
 May those good deeds never cease,
 Till our bark shall lower sail
 In the haven where is peace !

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